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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DURBAN 000079

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SUBJECT: POLITICAL VIOLENCE, STOLEN FUNDS, PARTY CHANGES,
PRIVITIZATION, AND REBELLION: KWAZULU NATAL ROUND-UP

REF: A: DURBAN 68; B: DURBAN 50

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¶1. (U) Summary. Political violence continues in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) amid government promises to bring stability to the Greytown area. The KZN Department of Education allegedly has been swindled out of millions and ends up paying twice for school supplies. For the first time in its history, the Democratic Alliance (DA) in KZN is led by a black man. The cost of uShaka Marine World may be too much for the Durban tax payers who own it. Members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) Youth Brigade push for a change in leadership and vision. End Summary.

Political Violence Continues in KZN

¶2. (U) As reported in Ref A, post-election political violence continues in KZN. On June 26, dozens of IFP supporters marched in Greytown in protest against what they claimed was the ANC's attempt to push the IFP out of one of its traditional strongholds. Protesters vowed to fight back if ANC and IFP party leaders could not resolve their political differences. The crowd chanted "Makuliwe, Makuliwe," (let there be war) and one protester warned, "We haven't forgotten how to use our guns, and we haven't thrown them away.' MEC (Member of Executive Council - like a provincial 'minister') for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Bheki Cele promised that political intolerance will not be tolerated by the police, and that the government will do everything in its power to bring stability to Greytown. On July 11, a group of six men were murdered near Greytown, but police have not determined if the incident was politically motivated. The leading theory is that the killings were the result of a family feud.

KZN Department of Education (KZN DOE) Fleeced

¶3. (SBU) Black Economic Empowerment entrepreneur, Jabulani Mabaso, has been accused of defrauding the KZN DOE of about R200 million (\$25 million). Local media reported that Mabaso received a tender to supply stationery and wall maps to all schools in KZN, but the supplies were never delivered. In 2008, the IFP alleged that the DOE had awarded the tender to Mabaso because he was a business partner of the husband of then Minister of Education, Ina Cronje. The IFP withdrew the allegation and apologized to Cronje after she threatened legal action against the party. No evidence has ever surfaced to substantiate the allegation, and Cronje has since been appointed the KZN MEC for Finance. The KZN DOE has secured a new distributor for its stationery and wall maps, and it hopes to recover the money it lost by liquidating Mabaso's seized assets.

KZN DA Change in Leadership

¶14. (U) Veteran politician Mike Ellis resigned as the leader of the DA in KZN but will remain his party's deputy chief whip in the national assembly. Ellis' departure means that KZN DA deputy leader Sizwe Mchunu is now the provincial leader making him at age 31 the youngest and first black person to become a provincial leader of the DA. Bio note: Mchunu was born in Imbali Township outside Pietermaritzburg, and was attracted to politics at a very young age. In 1996, while he was a freshman at the then University of Natal, he was recruited to the Pan African Student Organization (PASO), the student movement affiliated to the Pan Africanist Congress. Despite being elected chairman of PASO, he left the organization after a stint of seven months and joined the rival Democratic Students Society, the student wing of the then Democratic Party, which later gave birth to the DA. Mchunu remained with the party and worked his way up to become KZN DA deputy leader in 2008.

uShaka Marine World May be Privatized

¶15. (U) The eThekini municipality is considering privatizing the municipality-owned marine theme park to reduce the burden on the city's budget; uShaka Marine World is the most expensive project of its kind in South Africa. ANC Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo told the Pol/Econ Assistant that the city is concerned about the growing burden on the city's residents who pay for the facility with their taxes. On June 9, eThekini municipality's executive committee approved a further R15 million (\$1.8 million) loan for urgent maintenance and repairs at uShaka Marine World, increasing the municipality's equity in the theme park to R500 million (\$61 million).

¶16. (U) All major provincial parties supported the new loan, although the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Minority Front (MF) have expressed concern over the facility's growing

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expenses. 'Perhaps it was time for someone with deep pockets to buy it from us,' said a member of the DA's executive committee. City Manager, Mike Sutcliffe is committed to maintaining the municipality's ownership of the theme park and argues that uShaka Marine World has become a profitable tourist attraction and has increased property values in the area. Nevertheless, Durban Mayor Obed Mlaba has asked Sutcliffe to brief the executive committee on the continued benefits of owning the theme park.

IFP Faces Youth Rebellion

¶17. (U) Soon after the IFP was defeated by the ANC in the April general election, local newspapers reported that leaders of the IFP Youth Brigade (IFPYB) were demanding that the entire party leadership step down. As reported in Ref B, the IFFPYB puts the blame on party leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi for the IFP's poor showing in the election. On May 18, the IFP suspended eight KZN IFFPYB leaders, including KZN Chairperson Skhumbuzo Khenyeza. IFP Secretary General Musa Zondi said at a press conference that the conduct of the youth amounted to a 'gross violation of party discipline.' He further accused the suspended leaders of engaging in a campaign to tarnish the IFP's reputation.

¶18. (U) A local Zulu-language newspaper reported that IFP National Chairperson Zanele Magwaza-Msibi was behind the IFP youth revolt and that she was intent on resigning from the party, but she issued a press statement denying the report. She did, however, concede that the party is currently undergoing a 'rough patch following our electoral setback.' After a three-day emergency meeting in mid-June, the IFFPYB issued an apology for any harm it may have caused to the Prince's legacy. The IFFPYB also accused the media of 'untruthful coverage,' saying that while it is determined to transform the IFP, it never called for Buthelezi to step down.

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